Luther

THE Signs of CHRISTS coming, AND Of the laſt DAY.

Being the Subſtance of a very choice and excellent SERMON, preached by that Faithful Servant of Chriſt, and Famous Light of the Church, *Martin Luther*, upon *Luke* 21. ver. 25, 26, *&c.* to ver. 34. lately tranſlated out of his Enarrations on the Goſpels and Writings of the Apoſtles, and other places of Scripture.

Now publiſhed for the benefit of all thoſe that have an unfeigned deſire to underſtand and improve the works of God.

Job 36. 24, 25. *Remember, that thou magnifie his work that men behold. Every man may ſee it, man may behold it afar off.*

Pſalm 107. 43. *Whoſo is wiſe and will obſerve thoſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſs of the Lord.*

LONDON,

Printed *Anno Dom.* 1661.

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LUKE 21.

Ver. 25. *And there ſhall be ſigns in the Sun, and in the Moon, and in the Stars, and upon the earth diſtreſs of Nations, with perplexity, the Sea and the waves roaring.*

Ver. 26. *Mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after thoſe things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven ſhall be ſhaken.*

Ver. 27. *And then ſhall they ſee the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*

Ver. 28. *And when theſe things begin to come to paſs, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.*

Ver. 29. *And he ſpake to them a parable, Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees.*

Ver. 30. *When they now ſhoot forth, ye ſee and know of your own ſelves, that Summer is now nigh at hand.*

Ver. 31. *So likewiſe ye, when ye ſee theſe things come to paſs, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand.*

Ver. 32. *Verily I ſay unto you, This generation ſhall not paſs away, till all be fulfilled.*

Ver. 33. *Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away; but my words ſhall not paſs away.*

THat this Scripture may be the more clear to us; Firſt, we muſt know, that thoſe *Signs* which the Lord hath foretold, although they be great and many, yet ſhall ſo come to paſs and be fulfilled, that none, or at leaſt very few, ſhall acknowledge them, or reckon them for ſuch Signs. For theſe two things muſt both come to paſs together,

as is foretold by Christ and his Apostles, to wit, that many and great *Signs* shall come to pass, and yet that for all that, the last Day shall come so unexpectedly upon the world, that from its first Creation, it was never more secure, then in that very hour, wherein that day shall shine forth like Lightning. They shall indeed see the *Signs*, and shall hear also, that they were foretold by Christ, but such shall be their blindness, that they shall not only give no credit to them, but also shall deride those that do admonish them thereof; and through too great security, shall scoffingly say, Oh mad men! And what shall we live to *that day?* How foolishly fearful are you? for by the same reason you may fear, that the Heavens will fall upon your heads: Notwithstanding, there must needs be some, whom this Day shall overtake, and chiefly those who least expect it, which both the words of Christ, and also of his Apostles, wherein they have foretold this stupid security and sottishness, do most plainly testifie; which now we will consider.

Christ, assoon as he had warned of the foregoing things, saith in this place, *See that your hearts be not oppressed with surfetting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this present life, and that day come upon you unawares, which as a snare shall come upon all the inhabitants on the earth.* Now, is it not manifest, out of these words, that men shall so securely give themselves up to eating and drinking, and to other businesses of this life, that being wholly drowned in these, they shall not so much as think of this Day: In the mean time, living and solacing themselves every where, I say, not only without all *fear* of this Day, but even without all *suspition* of it. For, except the *security* of men were very great, how were it possible that that Day should come suddainly, and unexpectedly upon the world? For Christ hath foretold, *that it shall come as a snare*, wherein Birds and Beasts are then chiefly taken, when they do the most securely seek their food. And by this, he hath plainly enough signified, that worldly men about that Day, shall live in the highest Delights and Pleasures, and shall also be most intent about the affairs of this life, in building houses, in planting Gardens and Orchards, in heaping up riches, and that with far greater, both *art* and *diligence*, then ever before: And

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when they ſhall not doubt, but that the Day of the Lord, is more then a thouſand years yet to come, then preſently, and in a very moment ſhall they be ſet before the dreadful Tribunal of God. This ſame thing alſo, is meant by that which the Lord ſaid in *Luke* 17. *As the lightning from heaven, doth ſuddenly enlighten all things that are under heaven, ſo ſhall the Son of Man be, in his Day*; whereby doubtleſs, ſuch a *ſuddainneſs* of this Day is ſignified, as cannot poſſibly be expreſſed by any other ſimilitude. And it follows there, *As it was in the dayes of* Noah, *ſo ſhall it be at the coming of the Son of Man, they did eat, they drank, they married wives, and were given in marriage, till the day wherein* Noah *betook himſelf to the Ark, and then came the flood and deſtroyed them all.* And likewiſe, *As it was in the dayes of* Lot, *they did eat and drink, bought and ſold, planted and built, but in that very day, in which* Lot *went out of* Sodom, *it rained fire and brimſtone from heaven, and deſtroyed them all; So ſhall it be, in that Day, wherein the Son of man ſhall be manifeſted.*

And ſo by theſe words, it is moſt plainly ſhewed, that about that Day, men ſhall live not only in deep Security, but alſo ſhall be ſo deeply plunged in the affairs of this life, that they cannot poſſibly be more. And yet notwithſtanding all this, moſt certain it is, that Chriſt hath not foretold theſe Signs, to the intent that *no man* ſhould know, or acknowledge them, when they ſhall come to paſs, though, (as we are ſufficiently inſtructed by the foregoing words of Chriſt) there ſhould be very few, as in the dayes of *Noah* and *Lot* there were *ſome*, though very few, who were not ignorant of the wrath of God coming upon them; For except there ſhould be *ſome* who ſhould know thoſe Signs, *Chriſt* ſhould have in vain foretold them, ſaying, *When you ſhall ſee theſe things come to paſs, know, that that Day is at hand.* And again, *Then lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth near.*

Wherefore undoubtedly there muſt needs be *ſome* living in the time of theſe Signs, who ſhall both *know* and *acknowledge* the Signs, and ſhall alſo, as the Lord doth admoniſh, *lift up their Heads, and expect their Redemption*, though they cannot certainly know that *preciſe day*. And for this cauſe,

we our ſelves ought not to live ſo ſecurely, but to conſider very diligently, whether or no perchance, thoſe Signs are now brought forth, or have been brought forth already, or are yet hereafter to be brought forth. For my part, I would compell no man to believe me, and yet in this matter I will not yield up my Judgement to any other, namely, that the laſt Day is not far off. Into which judgement, thoſe very ſelf ſame Signs foretold of Chriſt, do draw me. For if any one turn over all *Hiſtories*, he ſhall not find from Chriſts time to this, any like that which hath been this laſt hundred years, all things conſidered together. For we never read that men *built* and *planted* ſo much, and ſo generally, and with ſo great coſt before. Never did men ſo commonly addict themſelves to ſuch divers and pretious *Dainties*; and exceſs of *Apparel* is grown ſo great, that it can hardly grow greater.

Beſides who hath read from the beginning of the world, of the like Arts and Attempts of *Merchants*, who, both compaſs about, and devour the whole world? Furthermore all Arts almoſt, are become more exact then ever before, that none may doubt, but that they are come even to the very height. The Art of *painting*, *carving*, *engraving*, and of making *tapiſtry*, &c. were never more ſubtile and fine ſince Chriſts Nativity. Laſtly, ſuch *wits* now ſpring up, which ſearch out almoſt all things, that in this preſent Age, you ſhall have a young man of about twenty years old, that hath more Learning, then a little before this Age had twenty Doctors. The *Languages* alſo are revived, and the Knowledge of all things: and all manner of Wiſdom and Induſtry have received ſuch increaſes in this Age, that none can deny, but that the world in theſe things which appertain to the conveniencies of this preſent life, or (as Chriſt calls them) the *cares of this life*, ſuch as are, to eat, to drink, to build, to plant, to buy, to ſell, to care, and maintain Wife and Children, is come to that height, that any one may ſee, (as alſo it is commonly ſaid) that it cannot be higher, and that the affairs of this life, muſt needs either fall, or receive ſome other change. But now the world is at that paſs, that none hardly can think, either how they ſhould conveniently be changed, or yet how

they ſhould fall. Notwithſtanding ſome certain light ſhines forth, and ſome kind of day, whatſoever it is, ariſeth, it cannot be otherwiſe; For as to the temporal things of this life, wherewith the body is nouriſhed, there was never before, ſo much prudence, induſtry and learning, in the Common-wealth of Chriſtians. I mention not thoſe new inventions, ſuch as the Art of Printing, the uſe of Guns, and many other things, both in Military and Civil affairs. Yea and alſo all things are come to the very height, not only in worldly but in Spiritual things; there were never ſeen more Errors, Sins, and Lies from the beginning of the world then now. For at *Conſtance*, the *Goſpel* of Chriſt was not more wickedly, then impudently condemned, and the pernicious *Inventions* of the *Pope* were received for *Laws*; all which being ſwallowed down, the very *marrow* of the world was exhauſted. Every day, more then a hundred thouſand *Maſſes* are offered up and down the world; to which wickedneſs, nothing can be compared. In the *interim* an innumerable thouſand, and ten thouſands of ſouls are driven to hell by their Auricular confeſſion, by their ſeven Sacraments, by their Indulgences, & Eccleſiaſtical Canons, and Injuctions, that one would verily think, that God had even quite reſigned up the world to the Devil. And in a word, it cannot be, that more impudent Lies, more pernicious Hereſies, more horrible blindneſs, more obſtinate Blaſpemie, ſhould ever come upon the World, then hath latly been brought upon it, by Biſhops, Colledges and Univerſities; inſomuch that now at laſt that *wretched Ariſtotle*, twice dead, is become the only Doctor and Governor of the Chriſtian Common-wealth; the *Pope* acting therein the part of Chriſts Vicar, of which office that man of ſin doth ſo proudly boaſt himſelf. For whileſt the knowledge of Chriſt was ſadly oppreſt, and even quite extinguiſhed in the hearts of the moſt, then did he invade Chriſts place, for whom the ſeat of Satan was more fit, then Chriſts. I mention not here thoſe groſs wickedneſſes, as luſts, ſlaughters, perfidiouſneſs, covetouſneſs and the like, which are now grown up to that degree, that there is left neither ſhame, nor fear in committing of them. *Luſt* hath outgone the bounds and uſe of nature, and hath ſwallowed up no

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ſort of men ſo much, as it hath done the *Spiritualty* as they call themſelves, though indeed they be nothing but *fleſh*, and of all men moſt deſtitute of the *Spirit*. Furthermore, what ever men may judge of other Signs, yet I am ſure of this, that the Lord hath plainly foretold, that about *his Day*, men ſhould ſecurely and boldly eat, drink, build, plant, buy, ſell, and marry, and ſhould wholly drown themſelves in the cares of this life; for in theſe laſt hundred years theſe things have prevailed more, then ever heretofore.

Neither is that which *Matthew* hath foretold, in ch. 24. touching that *Horrible Abomination* (to wit) Antichriſt, a leſs certain Signs to me then the former, namely that under his Kingdome, there ſhould be and prevail, extream blindneſs, the moſt pernicious Errors, and the higheſt wickedneſſes. All which things do moſt wretchedly flouriſh in the Kingdom of the *Pope*, and that in the greateſt *impudency* and *tyranny* that can be. Which Sign (I confeſs) above all the reſt, compells me ſtedfaſtly to believe, that Chriſt will not now ſtay long. For truly theſe wickedneſſes are more great and grievous, and theſe Blaſphemies are more horrible, then that Heaven ſhould long indure to behold them; for they do even *provoke* the Day of the Lord, and inſult over his Divine Vengeance; that it cannot be, but it muſt needs come quickly upon them, as a ſnare. If it were only *luxury* and *luſt*, as before the flood; or *outward ſins*, as among the Sodomites; I could not for this cauſe, be ſo ſoon brought to believe, that that Day of the Lord was ſo near at hand; but now ſeeing they overthrow, deſtroy, condemn and blaſpheme the Worſhip of God, the word of God, the Sacraments of God the Children of God and whatſoever elſe is of God, and do ſet up the Devil in his place, and worſhip and adore him for God, and honour his lyes inſtead of the Truth of God, I am verily perſwaded, that the end of this ſo grievous wickedneſs, will be ſooner then men do think. Amen.

The *Apoſtles* alſo have foretold this ſame groſs and deep ſecurity of men, about the Day of the Lord, as *Paul* in 1 *Theſ.* 5. ſaith, *the day of the Lord ſhall come as a thief in the night, ſo that when they ſhall ſay it is peace, there is no danger near, then ſuddain deſtruction ſhall overwhelm them.* Now every one knows

knowes, that the thief comes then, when men leaſt think of him. And *Peter* alſo ſaith, 2 *Pet.* 3. *That in the laſt dayes, there ſhall come Impoſtors, who ſhall walk in deceit, according to their own luſts, and ſhall ſay where is his promiſe, where is his coming? for ſince the Fathers are dead, all things continue as from the beginning: But the Day of the Lord ſhall come as a thief, in which the Heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe,* &c. Now who do you think are they that walk according to their own luſts, but the Papiſts, who neither fear men nor God, but domineer over all, that they may wholly live according to their own luſts, it is *they* that ſay, *where is his Coming?* And do you think that the *laſt Day* is at hand? Oh ridiculous! ſurely all things ſhall remain for a while, as they have been. We read antiently, that they of *Jeruſalem* were of the ſame mind, and ſmitten with the ſame blindneſs, who having ſeen many Signs, yet could not be perſwaded that they did portend *their* Deſtruction, till it came upon them at unawares. Yea from the beginning of the world, the wicked would never indure to believe that their deſtruction was at hand, before they felt it, that it might be fulfilled which is written in *Pſalm* 54. *Bloody and deceitful men ſhall not live out half their dayes.* For they alwaies preſume and never fear, wherefore the wrath of God muſt needs overwhelm them unawares. And ſo it ſhall undoubtedly happen to our Papiſts, who when they ſhall think, that this great Day, is a thouſand years yet to come, it ſhall come upon them the very next night. But now let us conſider the reſt of the Signs.

There ſhall be ſigns in the Sun. The Sign in the Sun is, that it ſhall *loſe its light*, which thing we have often ſeen done; for ſo it is foretold, *Matth.* 24. *That the Sun ſhall loſe its light.* Now in this matter I will not raſhly impoſe upon any one, but will freely declare my own ſenſe. There are ſome that think the Sun ſhall be ſo obſcured, that afterwards it ſhall never give forth any more light, which I reckon to be a miſtake, becauſe Day and Night muſt needs continue till the end of all things; ſeeing the Lord hath promiſed, that ſo long as the world ſhall ſtand, *there ſhall not want ſeed time and harveſt, heat and cold, ſummer and winter,*

night and day. Wherefore this Sign muſt ſo come to paſs, that notwithſtanding its fulfilling, day and night muſt ſtill remain. whence it is evident, that this Sign in the Sun, ſhall be nothing elſe, but that it ſhall loſe its light for a time, which we ſee commonly to happen, and do call it the *Eclipſe.* And hereunto it appertains, that that Sign in the Sun doth alwayes portend ſome great calamity; which experience hath ſufficiently made good, by the teſtimony almoſt of all Hiſtories. Now in the years lately going before, there have happened many Eclipſes of the Sun, and more frequently, as I think, then ever heretofore; and yet, through the Lords patience, no notable effects have followed, which is the cauſe that they begin wholly to be neglected and to be reckoned not worth the taking notice of. And this madneſs the Aſtrologers have furthered, attributing theſe things (and that not untruely) to the courſe of Nature, whereby not the ſlothfulneſs only, but alſo the ſecurity of thoſe carnal men, is both increaſed and confirmed; But notwithſtanding the Lord proceeds in his work, when we ſnort ſecurely. And although both the courſe of Nature allowes it, and the revolution of the Heavens require, that theſe Defections of the Sun ſhould come to paſs, yet are they alwayes alſo, Predictions of the wrath of God, and uſually one calamity or other follows them; Now becauſe ſuch Defections have happened heretofore, muſt God therefore create another Sun, and another Moon, and other Stars, or ſhew forth other Signs in the ſame? We rather ſay, that from the beginning of the world, the courſe of the Heavens was ſo ordered, that towards the end of the world, by the frequent Eclipſes that ſhould happen, it ſhould foreſhew the Day of the Lord. For even the Heathen write, that that which we call a Comet, is a natural impreſſion; and yet notwithſtanding, the ſame men write, that no ſuch Comet is produced, but that it ſignifies ſome notable Inconvenience to be near. But our blind Guides do follow *Ariſtotle*, (fools follow a fool) who hath writ a peculiar book, touching *Heavenly Impreſſions*, attributing them all to Nature; neither do they conſider, that they may both come to paſs by the courſe of Nature, and yet alſo be Signs appointed by God, to foreſhew his diſpleaſure which

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hangs over the world; And ſo as that ſame God of theirs, to wit *Ariſtotle*, hath ſaid, *that if one abſurdity be granted, a thouſand will follow*, ſo this frantick Heathen being received for the only Doctor, the whole world is filled with mad and doltiſh Maſters, who although they brag much of the knowledge of Nature, yet being indeed as ignorant of that, as of the knowledge of Grace, they have brought to paſs, that other men alſo ſhould be left deſtitute even of Common Senſe. But who ever thou art that wouldſt not periſh with thoſe blind Dolts, perſwade thy ſelf, that what ever unuſual thing thou ſeeſt to happen in the Heavens, it doth undoubtedly ſignifie the wrath of God.

And in the Moon. And this Sign is, as *Matthew* teſtifies, in ch. 24. *That the Moon ſhall withdraw its light*, that is, ſhall ſuffer an *Eclipſe*. And of this Sign we may Judge the ſame, as of the Eclipſe of the Sun; Which alſo in theſe few laſt years, have been very frequent. For there hath not been a year for this long time, in which there hath not happened one Eclipſe or other, either of the Sun or of the Moon, oftentimes of both of them, ſometimes twice of one of them in the ſame year. Which if they be not Signs, I know not what Signs we ſhall expect. For though, in former Ages alſo, the like Eclipſes have happened; yet never ſo often, neither have ſo many of them been ſeen together. The Signs that went before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, had alſo been ſeen before, but nevertheleſs they were Signs now to them, and did portend the Deſtruction of that City. And ſo theſe Defections, though they have happened before, yet notwithſtanding alſo are they Signs of the laſt Day, ſeeing the Lord hath ſo foretold; eſpecially, ſeeing they are now ſeen more frequently then ever heretofore.

And in the Stars. This ſign is that, which Chriſt doth more clearly ſpeak of, in *Matth.* 24. where he ſaith, *The Stars ſhall fall from Heaven*; which thing we often ſee to come to paſs, and I know not, whether ever ſo frequently heretofore. *Ariſtotle* that *fool-leader* of the Univerſities, affirms that they are Natural things, and of no account; but we who know the *Goſpel* to be the word of the Lord,

and Divine Wiſdom, neglecting *Ariſtotle*, let us acknowledge, that the falling of the Stars is a Sign of the laſt Day, as alſo the Eclipſes of the Sun and Moon. For the Goſpel which doth teſtifie them to be Signs hereof, cannot deceive us. And ſeeing theſe come to paſs now more frequently then heretofore, and yet (which formerly hath been uſual) no great calamity hath followed, this ſurely is the reaſon that we ſhould believe that theſe Signes do foreſhew the glorious coming of Chriſt: which truly as they do the more notably foretel the great Day of the Lord, ſo do they come to paſs the more, and the more often. Very few indeed do mind theſe things, but it was foretold of Chriſt it ſhould be ſo, that the men of the World might expect other Signs, as the *Jews* did expect another *Chriſt*.

And in the earth, Diſtreſs of Nations through perplexity. This we are not ſo to underſtand, as if all Nations, or the greater part of them, ſhould ſuffer this Trouble. For we muſt remember, that the Signs here foretold are ſuch, that they be acknowledged but of few, to wit, only of the Elect. Wherefore as the Defections of the Sun, do not laſt a whole year, or a month, and the Defections of the Moon, not a week, or a whole night, but only an hour or two; and as all the Stars do not fall from Heaven, but a few only, that they may remain Signs, which the Godly only do take notice of; and they are not ſuch great changes of things, that the wicked alſo ſhould be compelled to obſerve them, whom that day ſhall overtake, whileſt they are delighting themſelves in great ſecurity; ſo many ſhall not ſuffer this Preſſure and Perplexity, neither ſhall they ſuffer it continually, that ſo it may remain a Sign to the Godly only, and that the wicked who believe *Aſtrologers* more then God, may account them Natural things, attributing them either to the Complexion, or to Melancholy, or to the Stars, or to ſome other Natural cauſe, and ſo contemning theſe manifeſt Signs, perſevere in their own Blindneſs: ſeeing indeed theſe Signs manifeſtly, but not acknowledging them for ſuch, as the *Jews* ſaw *Jeſus*, and yet did not know him to be the Chriſt. Furthermore this Preſſure is not corporal; For, as is ſhewed out of the plain words of Chriſt, there ſhall be

be Peace, and Riches enow, about the Day of the Lord, ſeeing men at that very time, ſhall be moſt of all addicted to eating, and drinking, building, and planting, and trading, and marrying, and to all other affairs of this preſent life, which could not be, except they did then enjoy abundance of Peace and Plenty. Wherefore, I do underſtand this preſſure, to be that perplexity of Conſcience, when it being oppreſſed with its ſins, finds no way, whereby it may be relieved, and refreſhed: For the Goſpel, being oppreſſed and ſtopt, whereby only afflicted Conſciences can be comforted, and Humane Doctrines being ſet up inſtead thereof, by which they teach afflicted ſouls to blot out their ſins, with their own pitiful Works, and thereby alſo to merit Heaven; how could it be otherwiſe, but that many oppreſſed and afflicted Conſciences, ſhould even almoſt quite deſpair? For ſuch Conſciences, do earneſtly deſire to live godly, and to do well, and to obtain ſalvation, and yet what ever is taught them of men, doth not ſatisfie them, though they perform all things diligently (for this is that water, that whoſoever drinks thereof, ſhall thirſt again) how then can it be, but that their anguiſh and torment, muſt be exceeding grievous? They feel their ſins, they are oppreſt with them, and endeavour to their utmoſt power by all means to be rid of them, and for this cauſe, they embrace, do, and endure any thing, but yet obtain by nothing, the very leaſt eaſe; becauſe Humane Works are wholly unable to take away ſin; and hence ariſeth that *trembling* and *doubtfulneſs of mind* in them, which *Luke* terms ἀπορίαν; for afflicted Conſciences become ſo perplexed, that they know not which way to turn themſelves, or what to undertake, and being placed in this doubtfulneſs and perplexity of mind, how eaſie a matter was it, for thoſe Impoſtors, the Apoſtles of Satan, the Teachers of Humane Inventions, to perſwade them any thing? And hereupon they undertook ſo many various and fooliſh Vows, Pilgrimages, Worſhipping of Images, Maſſes, buying of Dirges, and Prayers, many beat themſelves with rods, others entred into the Carthuſian Order, others embraced other things, though moſt grievous and ſevere, all which were the works of afflicted and troubled Conſciences, and that very thing which Chriſt

here foretold. For he useth these two words, συνοχὴ, & ἀπορία, of which the first signifies *Pressure* and *Straitness*, the other *Doubtfulness* and *Perplexity* of mind, as when a man is brought into any necessity, out of which he cannot possibly escape; as suppose he be shut up in a close prison, or any other strait place, in which appears no door of Hope, then doth he endure τὴν συνοχὴν, that is, *Straitness*, or as we have rendred it, *Pressure*. Afterwards, being thus straitned, and earnestly desiring to escape, and so studying and thinking, now this thing, now that, which not succeeding, or else proving impossible, he is then confounded in himself, and amazed with great perplexity, and this is ἡ ἀπορία, that *doubtfulness* and *perplexity of mind*. And this evil, those Consciences feel and have experience of, which being oppressed with sin, are yet destitute of the Gospel, and are driven up and down with Humane Doctrines. First, they feel themselves compassed about with sin, and as it were shut up in a close prison, from whence they cannot imagine any escape; and this is their *confinement* and *pressure*. Then presently the other evil ariseth, to wit, their *trembling*, and most grievous *perplexity of mind*. For they desire to be freed from sin, but wanting the Gospel, which holds forth Christ as the only Savior from sin, they sometimes seek this way, and sometimes that, even any way that their Confessors, and other Apostles of the Pope, those Destroyers of Consciences, shall uncertainly direct them, and (according to their impudency) shall perswade them to. And when they have done all that they perswade them to, they are in no better condition then they were before; yea they find sin to rage the more grievously, and then are they sadly doubting, and amazed, yea, are even confounded, not knowing which way to turn themselves, nor what to undertake. Now into this evil, the stupid and secure common people do not fall, but only some few, and they for the most part, the most serious people, who are of a good and studious mind, who desire to do good to all, and to hurt none, but to live honestly. Yet they have some secret sin, which doth grievously trouble them, and lash them even day and night, and gnaw them like a worm without intermission, so that they can never heartily rejoyce. These are the most desirable Beasts to the

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Popiſh Hunters, for they that are troubled with this diſtemper, will eaſily give and part with all they have. Now the Goſpel would be a ſingular comfort to theſe, for theſe are the poor to whom Chriſt himſelf preacheth, and commandeth all his Miniſters to preach to them alſo; ſeeing none do more greedily deſire his Doctrine, nor more heartily embrace it. And this ſign hath been ſo frequent, theſe laſt hundred years, that not a few through this *preſſure* and *perplexity*, have become ſottiſh and mad, which *Gerſon* alſo teſtifies. And though in former Ages there have been ſome ſuch, yet never were there ſo many, and ſo generally, as in this Age of ours: becauſe never did any Humane Doctrine, by the hundredth part, reign ſo generally, and ſo cruelly rend and torment ſo many Conſciences, as the Doctrine and Laws of the Pope, and his ſhaven and hooded Diſciples. For no injunction hath been ſo great a cauſe of this evil, as that of Confeſſion, which an hundred years ago, either was not at all, or was not ſo exacted. And ſo that *preſſure* and *terror* of Conſciences, was not before a Sign of the laſt Day, when it was neither ſo frequent, nor ſo urgent. But now, when the Precepts of men being exceedingly increaſed, and moſt ſeverely exacted, the torture of mens Conſciences is more cruel and frequent then ever before, it is moſt certainly become a Sign of Chriſts coming, ſeeing thoſe Signs muſt needs be great and frequent, which the godly only do take notice of, but the wicked do ſecurely contemn, as hath been often ſaid before.

The Sea and the waves thereof roaring. This roaring of the Sea, and commotions of the waters, is wont to be brought to paſs by the winds, as is all the noiſe of the Sea and the waters. Now by the Sea we are to underſtand, not only the Ocean, but alſo all other Lakes and ſtanding waters, which are moved by the violence of the winds. For according to the phraſe of the Scripture, as it is in the firſt of *Geneſis*, all gatherings together of waters, whether the Seas, or ſtanding waters, or Lakes, are called by the name of the Sea. The waves, are the commotions, or troublings, or ſtorms of the Sea or ſtanding waters. Now as it hath been ſpoken already of former Signs, ſo it is alſo to be underſtood here, that not all Seas, ſtanding waters and Lakes, ſhould all together at once be

be ſhaken and troubled with the winds, but ſeeing this is to be a Sign, ſome of them muſt needs roar, and that often; for as all the Stars do not fall, and as all Men are not troubled and diſtreſſed in their Conſciences, ſo neither is it neceſſary that all Seas and Waters ſhould be troubled, and roar with the winds. Now here our ſweet *Miſtreſs Philoſophy*, ſitting in its own Kingdom, the Univerſities, will loudly laugh at us. What, (will it ſay) did you never feel the wind? Did you never hear the roaring of the Sea? You might eaſily learn from my *Ariſtotle*, that theſe are natural things. But let us paſs by theſe things, who do well know, that the Word of God, and theſe Signs, are nothing elſe but ridiculous things to thoſe wiſe men, or rather Monſters of men. We will undoubtedly believe the Scriptures, which teach us, that thoſe unwonted tempeſts of the winds, and roarings of the waters, are Signs of the laſt Day. Which though they have happened heretofore, yet not ſo vehemently nor ſo frequently. Within this ten or twelve years laſt paſt, there hath been ſuch tempeſts and roarings of the waters, beſides that which is to come hereafter, that I do not believe that the like hath been in former times. We are further to conſider, that when the former Ages have ſeen but ſome certain of theſe Signs, and that ſeldom to come to paſs, in our Age they come in abundance, and frequently. We ſee the Sun to be darkened, and the Moon, the Stars to fall, men to be diſtreſſed, the winds and waters to make a noiſe, and whatever elſe is foretold of the Lord, all of them to come to paſs as it were together. Beſides, we have ſeen not a few Comets, having the form of the Croſs, imprinted from heaven, both on the bodies and garments of men, new kinds of diſeaſes, as the French Pox, and ſome others. How many other Signs alſo, and unuſual impreſſions, have we ſeen in the Heavens, in the Sun, Moon, Stars, Rain-bows, and ſtrange Apparitions, in theſe laſt four years? Let us at leaſt acknowledge theſe to be Signs, and Signs of ſome great and notable change, which the *Aſtrologers* and our ſweet *Lady Phyſiologie*, could not poſſibly attribute to the natural courſe of the Stars, ſeeing they neither foreknew, nor fore-told any ſuch things before. Neither can any *Aſtrologer* rationally ſay, that the courſe of the Heavens did fore-

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tell that dreadful Monſter, which *Tiber* near *Rome* caſt forth. Which had an Aſſes head, the breaſt and belly of a woman, the right foot like an Elephants, the legs ſcaled like a fiſh, and behind, the head of a Dragon. By which undoubtedly the *Papacy* was ſignified, that great anger and revenge of God. Certainly ſo great a heap of Signs, doth portend ſomething more, then any reaſon of man can poſſibly imagine.

You may ſee the Picture of this Monſter, with the interpretation thereof, in Luther's *ſecond Tome, Printed at* Wittemberge, *fol.* 395.

And mens hearts ſhall fail them for fear, and for looking after thoſe things that ſhall come on the world. And theſe who ſo *pine away*, are not thoſe ſecure and ſlothful men, who contemn the Signs of God, and attribute them to Nature: But the beſt and moſt innocent, who weigh the judgements of God, and do meditate in their hearts of his marvailous works. Now to *faint* and *pine away*, is, to be ſo troubled and terrified at thoſe things, that ſhall come upon the world, that for fear of them they ſhall even die, or almoſt die, ſo that, that dread ſhall conſume all the moiſture of their bodies, and devour all their ſtrength, and ſhall cauſe them manifeſtly to wither and be dryed up. And the things which they fear and do expect ſhall come upon the world, are the laſt Day, the laſt Judgement, the fire of Hell, and eternal Deſtruction, and thoſe evils which do attend theſe. Theſe things *they* fear indeed and expect, but they ſhall come upon the world, that they may be the Signs thereof, and the reſt of the men of the world may feel them, who do now ſecurely contemn and deride thoſe that tremble and pine away, and through greatneſs of horror can ſcarce ſubſiſt. Who further are thoſe that *pine away*, I cannot ſay, unleſs perhaps it be they, who are exerciſed with that higheſt temptation of Death and Hell, of which *Taulerus* writes not a little. For that devours the fleſh and the blood, and conſumes the marrow and the bones, and is death it ſelf, and is ſo far beyond enduring, that no man can bear it, except he be upheld by a divine miracle. This ſome of the Patriarchs have taſted, *Abraham*, *Jacob*, *Moſes*, *David*, and ſome others, but towards the end of the world, it ſhall be more common. This Sign, it may be, ſhall be more manifeſt, though there have been not a few, and are daily ſome, who have had experience of this Temptation, though it hath been known to few. Such men feel the ſorrows of Death,

and wreſtle with it; in which encounter they perceive what things ſhall come upon the world, and do fear leſt they themſelves be ſwallowed up in them: Although there is not a little hope, that there are ſuch among theſe, to whom God is moſt merciful, and deſires their good. For the words of Chriſt import thus much, as if he had divided theſe two things, to wit, the *horror* of the things that ſhall come upon the world, and the *things themſelves* which ſhall come upon the world, ſo that the Elect ſhall be tryed with the fear and horror of theſe things, and the reſt ſhall be deſtroyed with thoſe horrible things themſelves. That fear and horror being accounted to the Godly for Death and Hell, but the World, who is deſtitute of this fear, ſhall feel Death and Hell themſelves, with their own eternal damnation.

For the Powers of Heaven ſhall be ſhaken. Theſe *Powers* ſome do interpret to be *Angels*. But ſeeing Chriſt calls theſe *ſigns*, by which we may know beforehand the coming of the laſt Day, they muſt needs be manifeſt and obvious to our bodily ſenſes. For even thoſe men, who pine away for fear and expectation of thoſe things that ſhall come upon the earth, though they be chiefly afflicted in mind, which no man can ſee, yet they are ſo afflicted, that it appears outwardly, for they pine away: After the ſame manner, the commotions of theſe *Powers* of *Heaven* muſt appear, and be known outwardly. Further, the Scriptures ſpeak of the Powers of Heaven, after two manner of wayes: One manner is, that by the Powers of Heaven, you may underſtand the Heavens endowed with power, or mighty, as being ſuch who overcome all the creatures by their vertue or influence; for the other creatures that are under Heaven, are moved and receive vertue, from the light, heat and motions of the Heavens. For, what were the world without the Heavens, but an huge, filthy, ill-favoured deſart? Upon the ſame ground, the Scripture calls Princes and Magiſtrates, Powers, to wit, becauſe they reign, and do govern their ſubjects as it were by their own Vertue or Power, and do make them induſtrious to buſineſs. In another ſenſe, the Powers of Heaven ſignifie the ſame, as the Hoſt or Ornament of Heaven, according to that in *Pſalm* 33. By the *Word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the vertue or*

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hoſt of them, by the breath of his mouth. And *Geneſis* 2. 1. *The heavens and the earth were finiſhed, and all the power,* that is, *all the Hoſt of them.* And in this ſenſe, for the moſt part, the Powers of Heaven are taken in the Scriptures. And it is manifeſt, even by theſe two texts, that the Hoſts and Powers of Heaven and Earth, do ſignifie thoſe things which are contained in Heaven and in Earth. As namely, in the Heavens, the Sun, Moon, Stars, and whatever elſe is above; in the Earth, men, beaſts, birds, fiſhes, trees, herbs, and what elſe is on the earth. And ſo the forementioned words of Chriſt, to wit, the *Powers of Heaven*, may be taken either way, but chiefly, that they ſhould ſignifie, the Powers of the Hoſt of Heaven, which are contained in Heaven. As if Chriſt had ſaid, All the creatures ſhall be moved, that they may foretell my great Day. The Sun and Moon, by their want of light, the Stars by their falling, the Nations by making wars, men by their preſſure and terror, the earth by its motion and ſhaking, the waters by their waves and roaring, the air by peſtilence and corruption, and ſo the Heavens by all their Hoſt and Power. But what properly is the ſhaking of theſe heavenly powers, is not certainly manifeſt to me, unleſs it ſhould be that great *Convention* of *Planets*, which ſhall begin in the twenty fourth year. For thoſe wandring Stars which they call Planets, are certainly of the Powers of Heaven, whoſe unuſual concourſe cannot chuſe but fore-tell ſome great thing to come upon the world. Neither did Chriſt fore-tell that all the powers of the world ſhould be ſhaken, but ſome; as not all the Stars ſhall fall, but ſome; not all men ſhall faint and pine away for fear, but ſome; not all waters ſhall alwayes roar, nor the Sun and Moon be alwayes darkened. For ſeeing theſe muſt needs be Signs, as hath been often ſaid, they muſt neceſſarily come to paſs in ſome things, at ſome times, that they may adminiſter occaſion to the Godly, to conſider of the approach of the Day of the Lord, above all other accidents, which are not Signs hereof. Further I do ſuppoſe, that that ſhaking of the *Powers of Heaven*, which is here ſpoke of, may poſſibly be that notable *concourſe of Stars*, and moſt unwonted *Conjunction of Planets*, which will be, as we have ſaid, in the twenty fourth year. *Aſtro-*

Rogers ſay, it fore-tells a Deluge, I wiſh it did indeed foretell the laſt Day. Again, I admoniſh thee, godly Reader, that it may not prevail with thee to think, that this *Conſtellation* is not a Sign of the approaching of the laſt Day, becauſe it ſhall come to paſs, by the natural courſe of the Stars; for if Chriſt ſhall ſay it is a Sign, who dare reckon it not worth our crediting? This alſo is to be well noted, that this doth then concur, when almoſt all the reſt of the Signs, are brought forth together as in an heap, & this happens at the ſame time. Wherefore ſuffer wicked men to doubt, and to contemn the Signs of God, but do thou be ſure to believe the Goſpel, for this certainly will be the moſt ſafe and moſt ſaving way. There are beſides theſe, other Signs ſet down, *Luke* 17. and *Matth.* 24. as Peſtilences, Earth-quakes, Famines, Wars, which although they have happened to the world often before, notwithſtanding they are for Signs, eſpecially when they fall in, with other Signs. And all men do confeſs, that the Wars of this preſent Age are ſo managed, that the old Captains, may ſeem but children in compariſon of thoſe we have now: And the skill of waging war hath ſo much encreaſed, that more cruel and deſperate arms and weapons of war, and other warlike Inſtruments, can hardly be invented, then are now. But ſeeing this preſent Scripture doth not mention theſe, we will alſo paſs them by; yet who ever thou art, that wilt not neglect thy own ſalvation, acknowledge theſe for Signs, which do fore-tell ſome great things. But there are very few, who do account theſe things worth the taking notice of, and the common people contemn them, which things they do to their own great harm, and hereafter will repent in vain, that they have done ſo.

Then ſhall they ſee the Son of man coming in a cloud, with Power and great Glory. By power here we may underſtand, the Hoſt of the Angels, and of the Saints, and of all the Creatures, wherewith Chriſt ſhall come accompanyed to Judgement; which I judge to be the trueſt underſtanding of this place. Although the Power, wherein Chriſt did foretell, he ſhould come, we may alſo take in this ſenſe, that Chriſt ſhall then appear in ſo much the greater power, by how much he appeared here in the greater weakneſs; And he doth

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not only ſay that he ſhall come, but that men ſhall ſee him coming. When Chriſt formerly being made man, viſited the world at his birth, he came indeed, but no body ſaw him; for men only beheld that form of a ſervant which he did aſſume: he comes alſo daily into the hearts of believers through faith, but he is not ſeen: but in this his laſt coming he ſhall come ſo manifeſtly, that all fleſh ſhall behold him. According to that in *Rev.* 1. *Every eye ſhall ſee him*, and they ſhall ſo ſee him, that they ſhall acknowledge the ſame Chriſt to be that man, who was born of the Virgin *Mary*, and lived here in the world. Otherwiſe he might have ſaid, And they ſhall ſee me, which word could not expreſly be underſtood of his corporal form, but now he ſaith, They ſhall ſee the *Son of Man*, and by this he hath moſt clrearly expreſſed, that this coming of his ſhall be corporal, and that he ſhall be ſeen bodily of all, as the Son of Man; in a bodily form indeed, but alſo with great Power, with great Armies of Angels, and with moſt admirable Glory, and Majeſty, ſitting upon a bright cloud, and ſurrounded with all the companies of all the Saints. Of which Day and appearing of Chriſt, the Scripture every where teſtifies many things, and all things, do indeed look unto this.

And when theſe things ſhall begin to come to paſs, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your Redemption draws near. Here, it may be, you will ſay, But who can look up, and lift up his head, when ſuch dreadful anger, and ſevere judgement, is coming on the world? The whole world trembles at the preſence of this Day, and through fear hangs down its head, and beholds the earth; how ſhould we then lift up our heads and look up, as men uſe to do which rejoice? I anſwer, That this is ſpoken not to Jews or Heathens, but to Chriſtians only. And true Chriſtians, as they are exerciſed with continual temptations and perſecutions, by reaſon of their ſins, and with divers evils, ſo they feel this preſent life, to be difficult and troubleſome, and ſo they alwaies deſire and pray, that they might exchange it: that is, that they may be ſet free from ſin and other evils, which alſo they pray for daily in the Lords prayer, ſaying, *Thy Kingdom come*, and *Deliver us from evil*. And if we be true Chriſtians, we pray for this

with our very hearts, otherwiſe we are no Chriſtians. Furthermore, when we pray for theſe things with our heart, and do deſire the coming of our Lord with our whole ſoul, it cannot be, but that we ſhould behold with great joy, the appearance of theſe Signs of Chriſts coming foretold in the word, though they be grievous to Nature to ſee; and as Chriſt here commands us, we ſhall behold with ſingular joy, theſe forerunners of our Redemption, looking up, and lifting up our heads: and ſhall embrace with both arms our only deſired Savior coming to us. For what a man hath deſired with his ſoul, and what he hath earneſtly prayed for, how can he chuſe but imbrace it with great joy, when it is come? Wherefore Chriſts words import thus much, You do daily intreat the Father, that his Kingdom may come to you, that thereby you may once be fully delivered from all evils and ſins; and therefore when the Signs foretold ſhall begin to come to paſs, lift up you your heads, and do not (as fearful men are wont) hang them down, but look up lively and chearfully, for that very Kingdom of God, and your deliverance from all evil, is drawing near.

Whoever of us therefore do hate our ſins, and do deſire to be fully ſet free from Death and Hell, we muſt not fear this coming of our Lord, but rather deſire it with all our hearts. *Paul* in 2 *Tim.* 4. ſaith, *In that day the Lord ſhall give me a crown of righteouſneſs, and not me only, but all that love his coming.* If therefore the Lord will give a Crown to them that love his coming, what may they expect, who hate and abhor it, but Hell for their reward, as his very enemies? And ſo in the Epiſtle to *Titus*, he commands us *To look for the bleſſed hope, and the coming of the glory of the great God.* And *Luke* 12. *Be ye your ſelves like unto men that wait for their Maſter, when he will return from the wedding.* They that fear this coming, and ſo would not have him come, what do they do, when they pray, *thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, deliver us from evil*, but mock God, and reſiſt his will? for he himſelf hath appointed that this day ſhall come at laſt, for the full deliverance of his Saints, and they as men twice wretched, do fear it, as a day of Deſtruction. How well do theſe agree with God, how truly do they pray, *thy will*

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be done? Wherefore we ought to take ſpecial care leſt any hatred or horror of this Day ſhould have any place in us, for it is an unhappy Sign, and can have no place except it be in Reprobates, whoſe iron necks and ſtony hearts, perchance it would not be unprofitable to be broken in pieces with this horror, if at leaſt by this means they might be brought to Repentance. But this Day muſt needs come as a joyful and lovely Day, to all the Godly, and ſuch as have unfeigned faith. For the ſelf ſame Day, ſhall bring forth together, both the greateſt quietneſs and joy to believers, and the greateſt trembling and horror to unbelievers; as the Goſpel which is the moſt ſweet thing to the Elect, is the moſt odious and hateful thing to Reprobates. Finally, for what cauſe ſhould the faithful who truſt in Chriſt be afraid of that Day; and not rather expect it with great deſire, and entertain it with great delight when it comes, ſeeing Chriſt comes purpoſely for their Redemption, and is wholly on their ſide? But thou wilt ſay, *I could indeed eaſily and heartily deſire and love this day, if I were righteous, and not ſo burdened with ſin as I am.* I anſwer. Be it ſo that thou art unrighteous, and heavy laden with ſin, yet what will this avail thee in this matter, to tremble at, and flee from the day of the Lord? For certainly by this means thou canſt never unburden thy ſelf of ſin, if thou ſhouldſt fear and tremble thus, a thouſand years together; for the damned are in this perpetual offence, and yet are not at all freed from their ſins by this means. For it is ſo impoſſible for thee, to free thy ſelf from ſin by this means, that thy ſin is increaſed thereby, and thou art the more hindred from being delivered from it, becauſe thou doſt fear againſt the will of the Lord. Wherefore we muſt avoid this fear, which is as fooliſh as it is hurtful; for though thou doſt fear and tremble never ſo much, yet this Day will come, and thou muſt needs be ſet before the Tribunal of the Judge; and therefore happy ſhall he be, that can love righteouſneſs, and expect the Day of the Lord with delight; for hence will ſpring up abundant Salvation. Wherefore if thou ſaiſt true, that thou art ſore grieved, becauſe thou art burdened with ſin, and that thou doſt deſire righteouſneſs with all thy heart, then give God thanks, and ſtill inſiſt on this deſire, and go on to

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thirſt after Deliverance from ſin: and I could wiſh, that this deſire might be ſo ſtrong in thee, that it might even kill thee. For no man is more prepared for this Day of the Lord, then he that doth moſt earneſtly deſire to be freed from ſin. And if thou beheld with this deſire, why doſt thou tremble? For that Day and you are well agreed: For you deſire to be freed from ſin, and that Day ſhall ſhine forth to this very end, that you may be freed: and therefore rather give thanks to God, who hath promiſed that this Day ſhall come, and do thou go on to deſire it, for Chriſt ſaith, *thy Redemption is drawing near.* But take thou heed, that thou deceive not thy ſelf, when thou ſaiſt thou deſireſt to be freed from thy ſins, and not to be afraid of that Day; for, perhaps thy heart is wicked, and deceives thee, and ſo doth fear this Day, not becauſe it is burdened with its ſins, and deſires deliverance, but rather becauſe for fear of that Day, it can no longer drown it ſelf licentiouſly and ſecurely in ſin. Here ſee to it, leſt the light that is in thee be darkneſs. For a heart that truly hates ſin, and which doth ſeriouſly deſire to be delivered from it, cannot chuſe but rejoice at the approach of this day, which will come for this very cauſe, to make him partaker of his deſires, and to perform the things he longs for. Wherefore if he do not rejoice, it is a certain argument, that he doth not indeed deſire to be freed from ſin. Wherefore we ought to take great care, that laying aſide the hatred and fear of this Day, we may truly and out of our very ſouls deſire to be freed from ſin, and ſo it will come to paſs, that we ſhall not only comfortably expect the coming of the Lord, but ſhall alſo with earneſt longing, and ſolid joy, pray for it, when we ſay, *Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done.* Now that we may attain to this, we muſt needs lay aſide our own judgement, and cleave cloſe to the naked Words of Chriſt, relying on them with our whole ſoul. For nothing can happen ſo terrible to the World about the time of Chriſts coming, which may not be unto thee matter of the greateſt conſolation and Joy: only, if thou weigh the words of our Savior, with a heart truly faithful. He had ſaid you ſhall *hear of rumors of Wars*, which things might terrifie us, and then preſently adds, *be not afraid*; which is nothing elſe, but

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be of an invincible courage, and entertain this Sign, whatever it is, with joy. He had ſaid, the Sun ſhould be darkned, and the Moon and the Stars ſhould fall, and men ſhould be troubled, and the Powers of Heaven ſhould be moved, and men ſhould pine away through fear of the judgement to come, all which things are little pleaſant to fleſh and blood; but how much conſolation hath he given to believers, when he ſubjoines, *look up, and lift up your heads, your Redemption draws near?* As if he ſhould have ſaid, Whatſoever in theſe Signs that I have foretold may ſeem terrible, all that belongs to the unbelieving world; but it ought to be unto you an occaſion of the greateſt and moſt full joy. Do not in this matter follow the ſenſe of the fleſh, but rather believe my Word. The fleſh trembling, had rather hang down its head, and in great trouble look on the earth, becauſe it dreads its own deſtruction, which ſhall indeed come upon unbelievers: but I command you to look chearfully, and to lift up your heads with rejoicing, becauſe no evil is drawing near, but your ſo long looked for, and hoped for, Redemption. Reſolve now whom you will believe, either the fleſh, which trembles at the Signs of your Salvation, as at the forerunners of Death, or Me the Author both of your Salvation, and of theſe Signs, who do affirm that they both ſignifie and bring along with them your full Redemption from all evil, and alſo the perfect conſummation of your whole Salvation. And how could He both more ſweetly and powerfully comfort us, and fortifie us againſt all terrors? And whom theſe things do not confirm, and cauſe with great joy and deſire to expect the Day of the Lord, I know not what may confirm and comfort them. What, do you think the Truth of God will lye to you, and lead you to a falſe confidence? Let thoſe things be true, which the Truth itſelf teacheth you; give thanks, and be confident; for you can have no comfort nor conſolation, if you neglect theſe Words. It is Chriſt that ſaith, *your Redemption draws nigh*, not your Damnation, and you would invert his words, and ſay, your Damnation draws near, and not your Redemption. And would you ſhun your Salvation, ſo that you can neither ſalute your God, who comes for your Redemption, nor yet anſwer him who ſalutes you? Let

this desperate madness be far from thee. It is no doubt but he speaks these words of so great consolation for weak hearts; who though they be godly, and in some measure prepared for that great Day, yet through too much fear and dread do hinder themselves from desiring the coming of Christ, of which sort, as we have said before, there will be more found towards the end of the world then formerly. And therefore he calls his coming the *Day of their Redemption*, as if he should say, I know that at that time, true faith and love being extinguished, iniquity will reign far and near, and revenge will be predominant; pestilences, famine, wars, will prevail, and hereupon it cannot be otherwise but you will fear, because you are flesh, and not wholly regenerated by the Spirit: but yet be of good cheer; for that my Day, shall free you from all those evils, and shall be the Day of your Redemption. What can afflicted Consciences hear with more joy and desire? Who would not greatly desire to be Redeemed? Who would indure to live in a world so filthy, so wretched, and so loaden with sin, and the punishment of sin? Who would not earnestly desire an end to so great miseries, to such dangers of mens Souls, to such destruction of their bodies, especially seeing Christ our Saviour doth so lovingly and comfortably call us from thence, and invite us to solid happiness? Those wretched feigners and preachers of Dreams, can never be sufficiently blamed, who have hid these words of Christ, so full of such great consolation, from afflicted Consciences, and turn their faith from them, and would compel men to righteousness only by fear and terror, and prepare men to the day of the Lord, by their own works, and satisfaction for their own sins. And by this means, what else hath been confirmed and increased in the hearts of men, but dread and horror, from whence the fear and hatred of the coming of the Lord hath received great increase? So that it most certain, that those Murderers of mens Consciences have done nothing else then wrought and confirmed in the hearts of men, a bitter emnity against God. For they have propounded Christ no otherwise to them then as a severe Judge, whom every one must please and win by his own works. But they have not mentioned so much as in one word, that

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he is a Redeemer, ſuch an one as he both names himſelf and willingly offers himſelf to be, whom any ſinner may with confidence expect to be his Savior, that is, his Deliverer from ſin, and from all other evils, and that without all their merit, out of his own only grace and goodneſs: and ſo, as much as lay in them, by concealing the *Goſpel* from men, and urging them only by Lawes and fear of puniſhment, they have quite driven them from God, and have filled them with the hatred of God, and not with love. Men indeed are to be terrified, but ſuch as are obſtinate and hardned, who alſo when they bgin to fear and tremble, muſt again be ſtrengthened and comforted.

And now hence it is manifeſt, that there are very few who pray the *Lords Prayer* aright, though it be ſaid daily everywhere innumerable times. For there are very few, who had not rather, that the laſt day ſhould never come, which is nothing elſe but to be unwilling that the Kingdom of God ſhould come; and ſo their heart prayes againſt their mouth; and God looks upon their heart, and they upon their mouth. Whereby it is come to paſs, that men have filled the world with Chappels and muttering of prayers, and whatſoever they mutter, that they think they pray, when the whole deſire of the heart is againſt God, and in truth ſounds no otherwiſe, then, *Let not thy Kingdom come*, or let it not come ſo ſoon. Which prayer is nothing elſe but the plain mocking of God, and very blaſphemy, of which the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 108. *Let his prayer be turned into ſin.* Nevertheleſs all the riches of the world are turned hither, that all places may ecchо with theſe blaſphemies: and let him be holy, whoſoever doth not call this the ſervice of God, and true worſhipping. Farther, they that do unwillingly feel ſome fear of the laſt Day, ought not for this cauſe to deſpair, but rather to endevour that that fear may be profitable to them: which will then be, if hence they ſhall take occaſion to pray, that the Lord of his grace would change that fear they have of his coming, into the deſire and love of it. For Chriſt hath promiſed, *that we ſhall receive whatſoever we ask*; and ſo ſuch trembling perſons are nearer to their ſalvation, then thoſe careleſs and ſecure ones, who neither tremble at, nor are comforted at the coming of the Lord; for

though they be destitute of the desire of this Day, yet they have that whereby they may be driven to it, to wit, the fear of it. But they that increase this fear to themselves, by considering the force of Gods Law, and the anger of God against sinners: and think by remaining thus trembling, they cure their sins, and purge themselves from them, they do not only not attain what they seek, but also by how much they weaken their faith, by so much do they hasten their destruction, and make themselves the more unprepared for that Day, and so use that fear very imprudently and evilly. For as *John* saith, *Fear must needs be cast away, and changed, love alwaies remaining*; and this is the way whereby we are purged from our sins, and obtain Salvation, and not at all by that desperate trembling, especially at this Day, in which Christ shall come to work out our full Redemption. There is but one use of this fear, and that is, that it may urge us to pray for the desire and love of that Day, and the fear itself is to vanish away: otherwise where it remains, it resists the good pleasure of God; and thy own Redemption, which is the sin against the Holy Ghost. Yet it is not meet that a man should altogether be without this fear; for as long as any thing of nature is remaining so long the absense of this fear, is not to be hoped for; yet it must needs be, that the Spirit should prevail at last; that every one may feel in himself that which Christ speaks of, *Mat.* 26. to wit, *a willing spirit, though the flesh be weak.*

And he shewed them a similitude. Behold the figtree and all other trees, when they shoot forth their budds, ye see and know of your own selves, that summer is then nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, understand that the Kindom of God is nigh. These words are full of Consolation. He doth not draw his Similitude from the *Autumn* or the *Winter*, when the trees being deprived of their leaves, look desolate, but from the *Spring* and the *Summer*, which time is pleasant and full of delights, wherein all the creatures come forth as it were in a new life and vigor, and list up their heads with a new kind of chearfulness; and by this similitude, he doth exhort us, to entertain the last Day with the like mind and affection, wherewith all the creatures seem to entertain the Spring and the Summer, to wit, with great joy and pleasure. For why

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else did he use this similitude chiefly, when otherwise he might have propounded any other? Farther he saith not, that Death and Hell draw near, but *the Kingdom of God*: which is nothing else, but that your Redemption draws near. For *We* are the Kingdom of God, as the Lord saith, *Luke* 17. *The Kingdom of God is within you*: wherefore the Kingdom of God is then at hand, when the time draws near that we shall be redeemed from sin, and from all other evils which do follow sin. For even now the Kingdom of God is begun within us, but in the spirit; and so long as we conflict here with sin, and do suffer many evils by reason of this, and whilest we are yet subject to death, the Kingdom of God is not perfect in us. But when at last sin and death, and all evils whatsoever shall be taken from us, which Christ shall fully perform at the last Day, but cannot be done in this present life, the Kingdom of God shall then be perfectly consummate in us. Whoever thou art therefore, who lovest life, and desirest to be numbred with true Christians, thou oughtest to examine thy self, and diligently to try thy heart, how thou art affected towards the Day of the Lord; and although thou shalt live an innocent life, yet do not trust to that, for it may be confounded in one moment; but rather lean on Christs Words, which promise that thy Redemption and Gods Kingdom shall come at that Day; that the coming thereof may not terrifie thee, with damned and desperate men, but that thou maist be the more inflamed with the servent desire thereof; that as oft as thou dost either remember it, or hear it made mention of, thy heart may leap within thee for spiritual joy, and even burn with the desire thereof, wherein thy Redemption and the Kingdom of God will certainly come. And except thou indevour to do this, never presume that thou shalt stand, when the Son of God comes, although thou thy self alone shouldest have all the Works and Merits of all the Saints.

Verily I say unto you, that this Generation shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled; Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my Words shall not pass away. And is there any cause that the Lord should so confirm his Words, and ratifie them, both with a Similitude, and also with an Oath, and should prove them to be true by a Sign, of

a Generation that ſhould not paſs away till all be fulfilled, adding farther, *that Heaven and Earth ſhould ſooner paſs away, then all this ſhould not be fulfilled* ? Now undoubtedly this is the cauſe, that the world, as hath been ſaid before, ſhall live in ſo great ſecurity about that Day, and ſhall ſo ſtoutly contemn all thoſe Signs foretold, though it ſhall both ſee them and feel them, that ſcarce any other Words of God ever were or can be ſo neglected, as theſe, wherein he fore-tells unto us his coming. For the whole world ſhall think, that they are not all the Signs of the laſt Day, and though they ſee them, yet they ſhall not believe them, ſo that the very Elect may be driven to doubt, touching thoſe Words and Signs of Chriſt; by which means it ſhall come to paſs, that that Day ſhall break forth then when it is leaſt of all expected of the world, and when men were never more ſecure and careleſs thereof; and ſo as *Paul* fore-told, (whoſe words we have quoted before) it ſhall ruſh upon them unawares, and inwrap them in everlaſting horror.

And ſo Chriſt willing to deliver his people from this moſt pernicious ſecurity, and alſo to rouze them up certainly to expect his coming, when the fore-named Signs ſhall appear, doth uſe ſo great aſſeveration, and ſuch ſtrong confirmation of his Word, that he may alwayes have a tender regard and great care of our infirmity. Let us not therefore be wanting to our ſelves, diſregarding the moſt diligent premonition and propheſie of Chriſt our Saviour; but ſeeing in our Age the Signs foretold by him, do often come to paſs, let us not think that the coming of Chriſt is far off. And now let us look up with heads lifted up, and let us expect our Redeemers coming with a longing and cheerful mind. For though the Signs may may ſeem uncertain, yet no man can deſpiſe them without danger: ſeeing there can be, not only no danger, but alſo great profit, if reckoning them as true, thou ſhalt prepare thy ſelf to meet thy Saviour; that is, if bidding farewell to preſent things, thou ſhalt be wholly taken up with the deſire of the Kingdom of God that is coming. Let us follow certain things, and the Signs we have lately ſeen brought forth, let us not doubt but that they are true Signs of the laſt Day; leaſt we ſtumble with thoſe prophane men of the world, and meet with ſuddain Deſtruction, when we ſhall promiſe nothing

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but quietneſs to our ſelves. And if it ſhould happen, that we ſhould be deceived in this particular, and the things we ſee, ſhould not prove thoſe Signs, yet ſhall we not be deceived nor err to our harm: but if thoſe chance to miſtake, who deſpiſe the ſe Signs, they do certainly miſs of their ſalvation, and at once periſh for ever.

The *Generation* which he ſaith *ſhall not paſs away till all theſe things be fulfilled*, is the Nation of the Jews. And from this place, it appears that they are deceived who affirm, that before the laſt Day all the Jews ſhall be converted unto Chriſt. Neither have they rightly underſtood that Scripture, *Joh.* 10. *There ſhall be one Shepherd and one ſheep-fold*; on which they have judged their error to be founded. For this propheſie of Chriſt was then fulfilled, when the Gentles came in to the believing Jews, & is yet to be fulfilled, by the coming in of the Jews to the Gentiles, which ſhall never be ſo, that the whole Nation of the Jews ſhall all at once believe in Chriſt. After this manner *Auguſtine* doth divers times interpret theſe words, and the very Word of Chriſt it ſelf doth require this interpretation, where he ſaith, *I have alſo other ſheep which are not of this fold, them alſo I muſt bring, and they ſhall hear my voice, and there ſhall be one fold and one Shepherd.* And ſo out of theſe words, it is evident to all, that the Lord ſpake here of the Gentiles, which through the Miniſtery of the Apoſtles were brought by him long ago to the fold of the Jews, and ſo the preſent propheſie is fulfilled. But here he ſaith, *This Generation*, to wit, of the *Jews*, which crucified Chriſt, ſhall not paſs away, till all be done, to the very end of the world. For the *Jews* muſt needs remain as a *Sign*, to the very laſt Day; and though ſome of them be converted unto Chriſt, yet their *Generation* and progenie ſhall not end, but ſome of them ſhall ſtill remain in the world till Chriſt ſhall come. Many have troubled themſelves in vain, in ſearching out how *the Heavens and Earth ſhall paſs away*. And at length they conſulted with that *heatheniſh Ariſtotle*, that he might interpret Chriſts Words to them. And from him they have gathered that which they teach, that Heaven and Earth ſhall not indeed paſs away according to their ſubſtance, though they ſhall be changed according to their qualities; not knowing what they ſpeak, or affirm. If the things they ſpeak, they underſtand

underſtand them thus, that the Heavens and Earth ſhould endure, though not in this *form*, they might ſpeak truly. But let thoſe blind men farewell. The truth is thus, that as our bodies ſhall be changed according to their ſubſtance, and yet the ſelf ſame bodies ſhall nevertheleſs riſe again according to their ſubſtance; ſo the Heavens and the Earth, with all the Elements, and all other bodies everywhere, together with all Humane Bodies, ſhall be diſſolved by fire in the laſt Day, and be brought into very aſhes, ſo that there ſhall be nothing but fire everywhere; and preſently all things ſhall be created new again, and moſt beautiful, ſo that our bodies ſhall equal the Sun in glory. But the Sun ſhall ſhine in a clearer light then now, ſeven times more brightly. Of theſe things we read, 2 *Pet.* 3. *The Day of the Lord ſhall come, in the which the Heavens and the Earth ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent heat*; and whatever things are built on earth, ſhall be brought into aſhes; but inſtead of theſe, we look for *new Heavens and a new Earth, wherein Righteouſneſs ſhall dwell.* And *Paul* alſo, 1 *Cor.* 3. foretold, that the laſt Day ſhould be *through fire.* And we read, *Iſa.* 30. *That the light of the Moon ſhall be as the light of the Sun, and the light of the Sun ſhall be ſeven-fold, as the light of ſeven dayes, in the day wherein the Lord ſhall bind up the breach of his people, and heal the ſtroak of their wound.* And in the ſixty fifth chapter, *For behold I create new Heavens and a new Earth, and the former ſhall not be remembred nor come into mind. But you ſhall be glad and rejoyce for ever, in that which I create.* When this paſſing away, and change of Heaven and Earth ſhall be, not only according to their Qualities, but according to their very Eſſence: Except perhaps you will deny, that when all things are reduced to aſhes, ſo that nothing remains of them, which happens to bodies conſumed by fire, that yet then they are not changed according to their ſubſtance. Now it may be, ſome body will ask, Where in the mean time our ſouls ſhall remain, when all thing ſhall be full of fire, ſo that there ſhall be no place remaining, but all ſhall be fire? And I would ask again of this curious man, Where our ſouls do dwell now, or whether they travail whileſt we ſleep? ſeeing they know nothing aright, ſo much as touching bodies, either their own or other mens. God verily is able ſo

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to keep them in his own hand, that they ſhall not ſo much as feel that great change, under which Heaven and Earth ſhall paſs. Do you think that they ſtand in need of ſome Fold, ſuch as Shepherds uſe to keep their ſheep in? It is ſufficient for a Chriſtian to know, that ſouls are in the hand of the Lord, and in the boſom of no creature; and if thou canſt not underſtand how this can be, let it not trouble thee, who canſt not know how it is with thee, when thou ſleepeſt, or when thou wakeſt, nor how near either ſleep or waking is to thee, which yet happen to thee every day. What raſhneſs therefore is it to pry into thoſe things? The Scripture teacheth thee to ſay, *Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit*, and here our knowledge ſtayes. In the mean time, the Heaven and the Earth are renewed, and our bodies alſo are raiſed up, and we are quickened into eternal Happineſs, *Amen*. For if we knew how our ſouls ſhould be preſerved, there would be no need of Faith; but then our Faith ſtands and flouriſhes, when we are wholly ignorant of what ſhall become of our ſouls, and yet notwithſtanding depart hence in a good Faith, though we cannot know preciſely whether, and commit our ſelves aſſuredly into the hands of God.

The Allegories of this Scripture.

LAſtly, we ſhall declare a few *Allegories* out of theſe Words. The *Sun* ſignifies Chriſt; the *Moon*, the Church; the *Stars*, Chriſtians; the *Powers of Heaven*, ſignifie the Prelates, or rather Planets in the Church. And thoſe corporal Signs, declare how things have been formerly carryed in the Church, and are yet carried to this Day. For they follow and attend our trade in ſin, and do foretell and threaten the revenge of them. And ſo the defection of the *Sun* ſignifies, that *Chriſt* ſhines not in the Church, that is, that the *Goſpel* is not preached, and that *Faith* is extinguiſhed, and that all *true Worſhip* of God periſhes. This hath been done, and is daily done, through the Doctrines and Works of men, the *Pope* ſitting in the place of Chriſt, and with his Biſhops, and annointed Clergy, darkning all things. Theſe are they who

have hid the true *Sun* from us, and have set up the Worship of Idols and vain shadows, instead of the Worship of God; whilest they have taught wretched men to merit and deserve God, by their shaving, hoods, bellowings, Organ-pipes, and noise, and with a thousand other most trifling trifles. Oh darkness! Oh blindness! And hence it necessarily followed, that the *Moon could not give her light*; for the light of the *Sun* being taken away, that is, *Faith*, in which *Christ* is truly present, being extinguished, the *Church* could not shine in Love, nor in any good Works, or Examples. All men being so intent on those childish toyes and worship, which is suteable to vain Idols, and childrens Babies, rather then to God, so that none had leisure to serve their Neighbour, or to take in hand true good Works. Oh palpable darkness again; The *fall of the Stars*, I thus interpret, When any one that is baptized, and added to the Christian Flock, doth become a *Priest* or a *Monk*. Let him believe me, to whom it is given, let him deride me, to whom it is not given; however I am certain I speak the truth. I do not say they are all damned, for God is able to preserve his own in the very midst of the fire. But this I say, whoever becomes a Priest or Monk, with this opinion, that he thinks in so doing, he embraces *a saving kind of life*, he departs from the *Faith* of *Christ* to *Infidelity*. Neither doth the *falling of the Stars* signifie those gross falls, as into adultery, or murder, or theft, but that whereby men slide from faith to infidelity. But Priests and Monks, except God help by a miracle, in as much as concerns their profession and manner of living, they are all Apostates from Christ, and the true denyers of him; so that in the whole world, there is no sort of people so wicked, and so without hope of amendment, as they are. The *Turks* indeed deny Christ; but in these two things they are less wicked then they. First, because they never were Christians, neither have Apostatized from the Faith, as these have done; and also, that they do not sin against the Word of God, and Sacraments, which they not only do without all hurt, but also sell it for the greatest merit, whilest they prostitute their most wicked Mass, for a sacrifice innumerable times every day: Which is the greatest and most horrible impiety that ever was invented from the beginning of the world to this day, or shall

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ever be hereafter. And to say all in one word, he departs from the *Faith*, and *falls from Heaven*, whoever he be that hopes to obtain Righteousness and Salvation by his own Works, or any manner of life devised by man: it belongs to Christs blood alone to make us righteous and to save us. And therefore as often as thou shalt see a *Star to fall from Heaven*, know thou that it signifies mens running into some singular way of Religion, thinking thereby to please God.

Farther, *the Pressure of the Nations*, and the *pining away of men*, doth signifie that torture of Conscience, which the holy Popes, and the falling Stars have experience of, whilest they make tryal of every thing, though never so troublesom, and yet obtain no ease thereby; wherefore the Scripture calls all their endeavours in this way, labour and sorrow. The *noise of the Winds*, and roaring of the *Waters*, do signifie, both prophane Governors and People: all of them promiscuously hurried with continuall perturbations, in such sort that no Prince agrees with another, nor no People nor Countrey with another; there is no mutual trust between them; all seek after their own profit. Hence it comes to pass, that there is no restraint of evil, no fear or awe upon earth. The whole world in the mean time, without any fear is mad on surfetting and drunkenness, and lust, and all manner of wickedness, and turns and confounds all things upside-down, and all places are full of all sorts of wickedness. *The Powers of Heaven*, are our Planets; that is, those Ecclesiastical Tyrants, the Pope, Bishops and Universities; who though they be wholly drowned in the Power, Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of this world, and that in the greatest security, and so do infinitely wander, will not be accounted wanderers; that is, Planets, which in Latine we call *errones*, because they do not move in a right course in the Heavens, but either backward, or on one side. Whom though our Prelates do really imitate, going alwaies obliquely, and never in the right way, according to our German Proverb, *Die Gelerten, die Verkerten*, that is, *all learned men are perverse*; yet they stoutly refuse to have communion with them in their Name. And when through the light of the Gospel, their shame is publikely manifested, and painted in its proper colours, that they are everywhere known to be

Omnes eruditi perversi. Ubi major scientia, illic malitia fortior.

dumb and unlearned Idols, and the ruine of ſouls, it is ſtrange how they are moved, and run together, as if they would make a *Conſtellation*; they endeavour, though in vain, by their *Bulls* and *Papers* to hinder and ſtop the truth, and threaten grievous things, and yet can do no good on it at all. The Day that declares all their Impoſtures is broke forth, though they do withſtand it; neither can this light, like a candle, be hid under a Buſhel. Furthermore, the Parable of the *Fig-tree*, ſeems to me to ſignifie the *Scripture*, which though hitherto it hath lain bid, having been caſt into a corner, yet now again doth bud forth, that is, is preached more clearly and fully, then in twelve hundred years before, and the knowledge of the Tongues increaſes. I doubt not, but the *Fig tree* ſignifies the *Scripture*, which might alſo be eaſily proved; for thoſe Fig-leaves, wherewith *Adam* and *Eve* did cover themſelves, did ſignifie the Words of the Scripture; for with theſe the old *Adam* doth alwayes endeavour to cover and adorn it ſelf, though in vain. This *Fig-tree* muſt needs bud and flouriſh, and nothing ſhall hinder it, though theſe Planets and wandring Prelates, be troubled themſelves thereat, and alſo trouble all other things. *Summer* certainly is near, I wiſh the *fruit* might follow the *leaves*. But I am afraid the Fig-tree will bring forth leaves only, ſeeing the moſt of us ſpeak much of Faith, but do not act and live accordingly. Theſe things ſhall be ſufficient to hint of the *Allegories*. He that deſires more, may hence take occaſion to furniſh himſelf. But it becomes our Planets, with their Miſcreants, to believe none of theſe things, that ſo the Scripture may be fulfilled, which brands them with the deepeſt ſecurity, and greateſt contempt, of all the Words, and Works, and Signs of God.

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